

New Postage Concept Introduced by USPS

The first stamp design in a new series features was released on May 17 at the National Stationery Show in New York City.

The 64¢ stamp picturing a Monarch Butterfly was issued by the USPS primarily for use on nonmachinable greeting card envelopes; thus the release at the Stationery show. The 64 cents pays the 44¢ First Class Letter rate plus the 20¢ “nonmachinable surcharge” that applies to envelopes that don’t meet the envelope aspect ratio (length divided by height not within 1.3 to 2.5), are rigid and do not bend easily, contain items that cause the mailpiece to be uneven or have an address that is parallel to the shorter dimension of the letter (vertical setup).

Participating manufacturers will print a silhouette image of a butterfly on their envelopes, making it easy for customers to understand the new butterfly stamp or equivalent postage is all that is needed to mail the card. The prescribed image that is available from the USPS is reproduced here.

Artist Tom Engeman used images of mounted butterflies to inspire the stamp art he created by computer. The highly stylized, simplified image of a monarch is more the illusion of the butterfly than an exact replica. Derry Noyes incorporated Engeman’s artwork into the stamp design.

The butterfly was chosen as a symbol that will be used for all future stamps for nonmachinable letters. When postal prices increase, USPS will issue a new butterfly design for this stamp.

The Butterfly stamp icon carries text that reads: “Butterfly Stamp or Equivalent Postage Required.” This implies that either the Butterfly stamp or postage totaling its value should be used.

The Greeting Card Association recommends that all square enve-



lopes and those that fall within the nonmachinable letter category carry the Butterfly stamp icon in the upper right-hand corner, thus making it easier for all concerned to determine postage for greeting cards and invitations that fall within the “nonmachinable” specifications.

Shown here enlarged 20%, but proportional, the dimensions of the Butterfly stamp are 1-1/4" x 1-1/4" while the Butterfly stamp icon measures 1-1/8" x 1-1/8". This size differential allows the icon to fit completely beneath the actual stamp. The USPS also specifies that the icon should be placed 3/16" from the top and right edges of the envelope, thus allowing room for placement of the stamp.

Derry Noyes also was the Art Director and the Typographer for the project. The Engraver credit was assigned to Trident and the Modeler credit to Avery Dennison.

The stamps were gravure printed by Avery Dennison. An initial print run of 20 million stamps pressure-sensitive adhesive stamps were produced. Colors used to print the stamps were cyan, magenta, yellow, black, cool gray and orange. Plate numbers in the four corners of the 20-stamp pane consist of the letter “V” to identify Avery Dennison as the printer followed by six single digits, one for each print color.

For first day covers, the usual rules apply. Affix stamps to envelopes addressed to yourself or others and send them in an outer envelope to Monarch (Butterfly) Stamp, Postmaster, Special Events, 421 8th Avenue, Room 2029B, New York, NY 10199-9998. (You can also enclose an outer envelope for return of the FDCs to prevent damage or double-cancellation in the mail.) The request deadline is July 19, 2010.